## War and reconstruction in Iraq pay off for America

Despite an unrelenting drumbeat of negative news, Iraqis and coalition forces make substantial progress in freedom, safety, health and development

By U.S. Rep. Joseph Knollenberg

really worth it. whether our efforts in Iraq were the situation in Iraq may

and ignored the substantial progress try in the best light, that unrelenting that has been made. the media that may not put our counmate issues in Iraq to be covered by drumbeat of negativity has obscured While there were and are legiti-

iraqi people better off? completed, it is appropriate to look the interim Iraqi government has been but as the turnover of sovereignty to United States more secure, and are the Because of our efforts in Iraq, is the hat, we must ask two questions: again at why we are in Iraq. To answer There are still many challenges,

Kurds, harbored known terrorists, used biological and chemica States, invaded two other countries, weapons against the Iranians and ntentions against the United They clearly harbored izing force in an unstable region. sein and his regime were a destabi-Let's be clear — Saddam Husnostile

ply with United Nations mandates

country capable. eye. There was no better choice but to oust Saddam and no other

the United States that Saddam Hus-Yes, it is indisputably better for

tion: Are the Iraqi people better This leads to the second ques-

not millions, of Iraqis during its murdered hundreds of thousands, if have to live in fear of a regime that attacks remain, Iraqis no longer reign of terror. That alone makes

infrastructure, neglected tor decades under Saddam, is being There is an endless list of achievetry's coffers, not building palaces. rebuilt. Iraqi oil is filling the coun-We have helped rehabilitate more 43 technical institutes and colleges beyond that. All 22 universities and han 2,500 schools. The country's are open as well as all 240 hospitals and more than 1,200 health clinics. improvements go

try's growing marketplace, sell for 78 cents each.

Vendors sell bootleg CDs in Baghdad, Iraq, including one of the July r video trial hearing of Saddam Hussein. The CDs, part of the coun-

Khalid Mohammed / Associated Pres

for it. In fact, you can read many

struggles they face every day living in frankly about the challenges and

their internet blogs.

The authors of these blogs speak

own country.

you to take a minute to see what in the mainstream media. I encourage their country that rarely surfaces here

Iraqis are really saying about their

in Iraq from Iraqis themselves on first hand accounts of the situation

Iraq. But they also write with an opti-

actions of Iraqi-Americans here. Despite the terrorist attacks and

We should also consider the

unsettled nature of Iraq, they have

bombers in Israel, refused to com-

We could no longer turn a blind

sein is no longer in power.

the situation better. While the threat of terrorist

Ments.
You don't have to take my word

## Iraqi views online One of the most well-known Iraqi

a success more will join to make this program working with this group, and I hope democratic Iraq. I'm proud to be succeed in creating a safe, free and they and their fellow Iraqis wil in Iraq. They have confidence that scale program to promote goodwil cans are actively working on a large not been scared away. Iraqi-Ameri

of the healthy democracy that we gic decisions and other actions Iraq is not a bad thing. It is the sign Questioning some of our strate-

but goals have been realized as where mistakes wouldn't be made), fact, it's hard to envision a scenario Mistakes have been made (in

also see that our efforts and sacriinterim Iraqi government, we must fices there are worthy of our great As power is turned over to the

blogs can be found at This also has links to other Iraqi

have in our country.

of our great nation to leave Iraq a stait. It will have been an effort worthy rorists who are trying to destabilize effort worthy of our great nation to ble and democratic country. help rebuild Iraq and fight the terregime of Saddam Hussein. It is an great nation to remove the odious

will to finish the job in Iraq? cally insignificant, attacks outlast our to carry out their brutal, but strategi time — will the ability of the terrorists We are engaged in a race against

are made of sterner stuff than our enemies give us credit for, that we see the value and possibilities that a free Iraq offers this country I believe the American people

that remain, but steel ourselves to see this through to a successful end. And once and for all, we will world a better place for all. we have the fortitude to make this demonstrate to our enemies Let us recognize the challenges

Lafayette, Detroit, MI 48226, (313) Send letters to The News at 615 W. gan's Ninth Congressional District Bloomfield Hills, represents Michi-U.S. Rep. Joseph Knollenberg, R-

## Communities fight problem of well-kept, but empty historic homes weirdest thing



renovated

houses in Charleston, S.C.'s seemed to crawl over the gardens weed inspectors district. Teams of fabled historic

In preservation

tion. Only one thing was missing:

houses stood totally dark. by children's tricycles or other an undraped window. Many of the find a TV image flashing through signs of life. At night, it was hard to The back yards seemed uncluttered

neighborhoods everywhere. It's a phenomenon in old New Orleans as well as in Venice, Italy. habitation can appear in historic flawless streets unsullied by human These Twilight Zone scenes of

clearly spare no expense in keeping Them up. Nor are the streets empty. houses. They all have owners who It's not that no one owns the

> ornate moldings and opulent woodbeaches and deluxe shopping. magnolias. They appreciate the plunk down one or several million work, as well as the proximity to away under the moonlight and the dollars for a romantic Southern get-

residence in Connecticut, their sec-Possibilities include their primary ond home in Costa Rica, a South the more expensive the house, the The oddest thing, locals say, is that Pacific cruise or an African safari. Where are the deed holders?

a while, the place begins to stop sus found that the number of chilthird in 10 years, to only 200. After the historic area had fallen by a dren living in the older section of

empty houses a problem people from all over. Charleston's success in preserving a Charleston is one — the solutions are that quality naturally attracts rich long-ago grandeur lost elsewhere, and hard to come by. The trends reflect For communities that consider

dation has held forums to discuss The Historic Charleston Foun-

it. This may be urban legend,

less time people seem to spend

bustling commercial centers, the some extent. If they are near face a depopulation problem to residents, but even these people districts may have more full-time usually have few if any children.

small backyards, dearth of minivan the suburbs. than parlors. So they move off to parking and schools that are not They don't want to put up with the gross inconvenience to families. and childless couples often seems a cy that attracts single professionals tops. They want media rooms more The pre-automobile-age intima-

> opening off an enormous kitchen.) takes money and a certain amount historic structure. And as the pubof idealism to preserve and live in a historic districts, the prices of their lic recognizes the unique beauty of This is a tough problem to fix. It

about how poverty saps the heart of cultural defeat. Much has been said seasonal resort represents a kind of survived the ages, having a once bustling neighborhood turn into a neighborhood. Wealth, clearly For cities and towns that have

books of most families.

houses can soar past the pocket